CLAIMS

1   1.   A method for handling database locks comprising:

2   detecting a new query from a new administrator for a set of database records

3   that are associated with a potential new lock;

4   determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being

5   authorized to acquire said new lock;

6   attempting to acquire said new lock if said new administrator has a chance of

7   being authorized; and

8   informing said new administrator of a failure to acquire said new lock if a prior

9   lock has already been acquired due to a prior query by a prior administrator.

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1   2.   A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein

2   informing said new administrator includes identifying the prior administrator.

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1   3.   A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 2 wherein

2   informing said new administrator includes providing contact information for said prior

3   administrator.

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1   4.   A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 further

2   comprising informing said new administrator that said new administrator is not

3   authorized to acquire said new lock if it is determined that said new administrator has

4   no chance of acquiring said new lock.

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1   5.   A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 further
2   comprising permitting access to said set of database records if said new administrator
3   acquires said new lock, and designating said new administrator as a prior
4   administrator and said new lock as a prior lock.
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1   6.   A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 5 further
2   comprising releasing said prior lock after said prior administrator has checked out
3   from said set of database records.
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1   7.   A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein
2   determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to
3   acquire said new lock includes whether said new administrator has write authorization
4   for said set of database records.
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1   8.   A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein
2   determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to
3   acquire said new lock includes whether said new administrator has a maximum
4   database access authorization.
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1   9.   A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein
2   determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to
3   acquire said new lock includes whether said set of database records personally pertain
4   to said new administrator .

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1   10. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein

2   determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to

3   acquire said new lock includes whether said new administrator is organizationally

4   authorized.

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1   11. A method for handling database locks as recited in claim 1 wherein

2   determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being authorized to

3   acquire said new lock includes whether said new administrator is currently authorized.

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1   12. A computer readable media including program code segments for

2   handling database locks comprising:

3   a code segment detecting a new query from a new administrator for a set of

4   database records that is associated with a potential new lock;

5   a code segment determining whether said new administrator has any chance of

6   being authorized to acquire said new lock;

7   a code segment attempting to acquire said new lock if said new administrator

8   has a chance of being authorized; and

9   a code segment informing said new administrator of a failure to acquire said

10   new lock if a prior lock has already been acquired due to a prior query by a prior

11   administrator.

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1   13. A computer readable media including program code segments for

2   handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein informing said new

3   administrator includes identifying the prior administrator.

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1   14.   A computer readable media including program code segments for
2   handling database locks as recited in claim 13 wherein informing said new
3   administrator includes providing contact information for said prior administrator.

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1   15.   A computer readable media including program code segments for
2   handling database locks as recited in claim 12 further comprising a code segment
3   informing said new administrator that said new administrator is not authorized to
4   acquire said new lock if it is determined that said new administrator has no chance of
5   acquiring said new lock.

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1   16.   A computer readable media including program code segments for
2   handling database locks as recited in claim 12 further comprising a code segment
3   permitting access to said set of database records if said new administrator acquires
4   said new lock, and designating said new administrator as a prior administrator and
5   said new lock as a prior lock.

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1   17.   A computer readable media including program code segments for
2   handling database locks as recited in claim 16 further comprising a code segment
3   releasing said prior lock after said prior administrator has checked out from said set of
4   database records.

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1   18.   A computer readable media including program code segments for
2   handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new

3   administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes

4   whether said new administrator has write authorization for said set of database

5   records.

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1   19.   A computer readable media including program code segments for

2   handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new

3   administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes

4   whether said new administrator has a maximum database access authorization.

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1   20.   A computer readable media including program code segments for

2   handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new

3   administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes

4   whether said set of database records personally pertain to said new administrator .

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1   21.   A computer readable media including program code segments for

2   handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new

3   administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes

4   whether said new administrator is organizationally authorized.

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1   22.   A computer readable media including program code segments for

2   handling database locks as recited in claim 12 wherein determining whether said new

3   administrator has any chance of being authorized to acquire said new lock includes

4   whether said new administrator is currently authorized.

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1   23.   A method for making a preliminary determination as to whether a
2   database administrator has authorization to access a set of database records
3   comprising:

4   determining that a database administrator has no chance of being authorized to
5   access a designated set of database records if said database administrator does not
6   have one or more of: (a) write authorization for said designated set of database
7   records; (b) if said designated set of database records are personal database records of
8   said database administrator of a type likely to create a conflict of interest, (c) if the
9   database administrator is not organizationally permitted to access said set of database
10   records; or (d) if said database administrator is not currently authorized; and

11   determining that a database administrator has a chance of being authorized if
12   said database administrator has one or more of: (a) write authorization and maximum
13   administrator authorization; and (b) write authorization, not maximum authorization,
14   not if said designated set of database records are personal database records of said
15   database administrator of a type likely to create a conflict of interest, if the database
16   administrator is not organizationally permitted to access said set of database records,
17   and currently authorized.

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1   24.   A computer readable media including program code segments for
2   making a preliminary determination as to whether a database administrator has
3   authorization to access a set of database records comprising:

4   a code segment determining that a database administrator has no chance of
5   being authorized to access a designated set of database records if said database
6   administrator does not have one or more of: (a) write authorization for said designated
7   set of database records; (b) if said designated set of database records are personal
8   database records of said database administrator of a type likely to create a conflict of
9   interest, (c) if the database administrator is not organizationally permitted to access
10   said set of database records; or (d) if said database administrator is not currently
11   authorized; and

12   a code segment determining that a database administrator has a chance of being

13   authorized if said database administrator has one or more of: (a) write authorization

14   and maximum administrator authorization; and (b) write authorization, not maximum

15   authorization, not if said designated set of database records are personal database

16   records of said database administrator of a type likely to create a conflict of interest, if

17   the database administrator is not organizationally permitted to access said set of

18   database records, and currently authorized.

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1   25.   A database system including locks comprising:

2   means for detecting a new query from a new administrator for a set of database

3   records capable that is associated with a new lock;

4   means for determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being

5   authorized to acquire said new lock;

6   means for attempting to acquire said new lock if said new administrator has a

7   chance of being authorized; and

8   means for informing said new administrator of a failure to acquire said new

9   lock if a prior lock has already been acquired due to a prior query by a prior

10   administrator.

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1   26.   A database system including locks as recited in claim 25 wherein

2   informing said new administrator includes means for identifying the prior

3   administrator.

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1   27.   A database system including locks as recited in claim 25 wherein

2   informing said new administrator includes means for providing contact information

3   for said prior administrator.

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1   28.   A database system including locks as recited in claim 25 further

2   comprising means for informing said new administrator that said new administrator is

3   not authorized to acquire said new lock if it is determined that said new administrator

4   has no chance of acquiring said new lock.

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1   29.   A database system including locks as recited in claim 25 further

2   comprising means for permitting access to said set of database records if said new

3   administrator acquires said new lock, and means for designating said new

4   administrator as a prior administrator and said new lock as a prior lock.

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1   30.   A database system comprising:

2   a plurality of administrator terminals;

3   a database server capable of being accessed by a plurality of administrators

4   associated with said plurality of administrator terminals, said database server

5   including, at least in part, a database program capable of managing a plurality of

6   records that may be grouped into sets of records, said database program including the

7   functionality of:

8   (a)   detecting a new query from a new administrator at a new administrator

9   terminal for a set of database records capable that is associated with a new lock;

10   (b)   determining whether said new administrator has any chance of being

11   authorized to acquire said new lock;

12   (c)   attempting to acquire said new lock if said new administrator has a

13   chance of being authorized; and

14   (d)   informing said new administrator at said new administrator terminal of a

15   failure to acquire said new lock if a prior lock has already been acquired due to a prior

16   query by a prior administrator on a prior administrator station.

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1   31.   A database system as recited in claim 30 wherein informing said new

2   administrator includes identifying, on said new administrator station, the prior

3   administrator.

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1   32.   A database system as recited in claim 31 wherein informing said new

2   administrator includes, on said new administrator station, providing contact

3   information for said prior administrator.

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1   33.   A database system as recited in claim 30 further comprising informing

2   said new administrator on said new administrator station that said new administrator is

3   not authorized to acquire said new lock if it is determined that said new administrator

4   has no chance of acquiring said new lock.

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1   34.   A database system as recited in claim 30 further comprising permitting

2   access to said set of database records via said new administrator terminal if said new

3   administrator acquires said new lock, and designating said new administrator as a

4   prior administrator and said new lock as a prior lock.